beCAUS
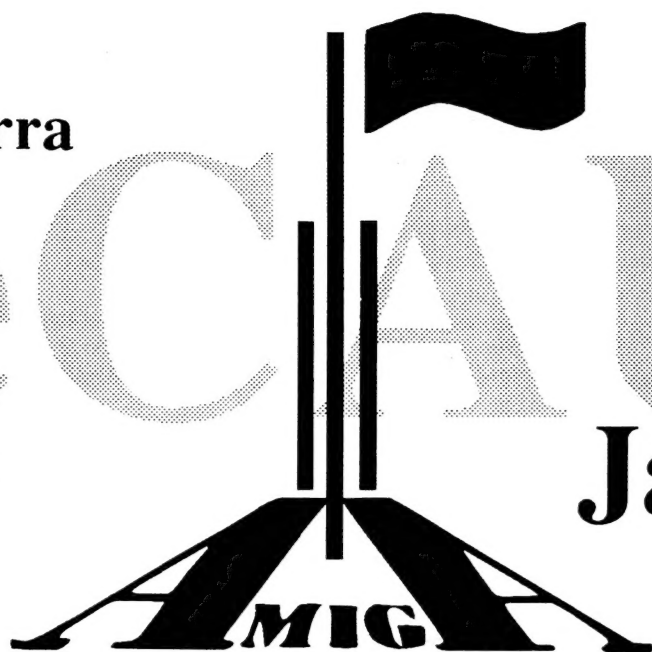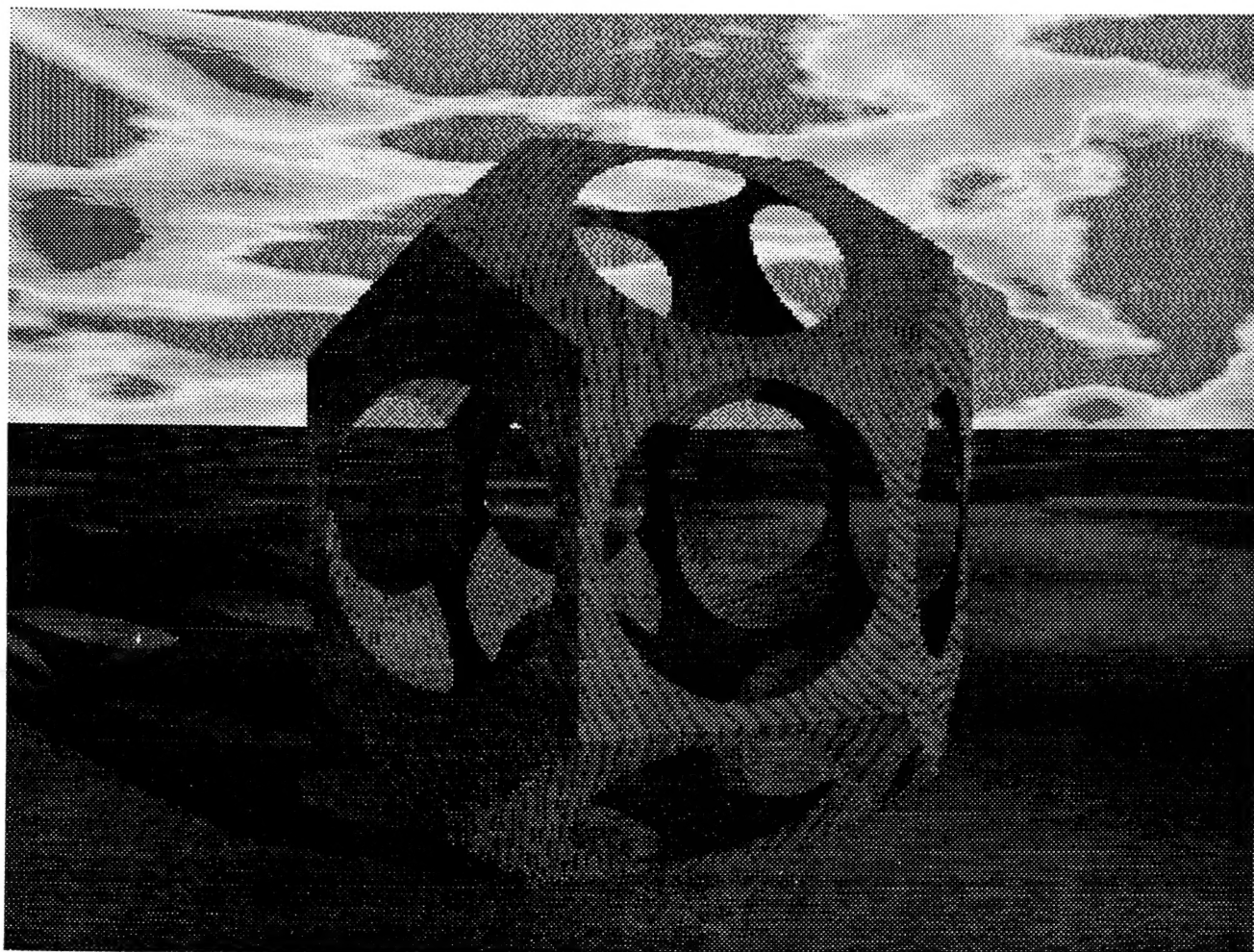
Canberra Amiga Users' Society Inc

January 1994

Amos Pro Compiler • **Radio Rhema**
Brilliance! • **NEC CD-ROM Drive**
Bad Medicine • **Amiga virus'**

Canberra Amiga Users' Society Inc

Aims of the Society

Canberra Amiga Users Society Incorporated (CAUS) is an independent group (currently with about 120 members) formed for the benefit of people who own, use or are interested in the Commodore Amiga computer.

Benefits

Benefits include a bi-monthly newsletter, monthly meetings, discounts, a bulletin board, Public Domain library, special interest groups (SIGs) and the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with other Amiga users.

Subscriptions

Membership of the Society is available for an annual fee of $20. This fee may be paid, with a filled-in application form, either at any of the monthly meetings or by mail to the Membership Secretary, PO Box 596, Canberra 2601.

Bulletin board

The CAUS bulletin board is online 24 hours and is maintained by our new Sysop Darrell Cowan and his team. To be a member of the bulletin board, you need to pay $5.00 additional yearly subscription (see article in this mag). The telephone number of the bulletin board is 292-5535.

Meetings

Meetings are held at 8 pm on the second Thursday of each month in either the Chifley Room or the auditorium at the Canberra Workers' Club in Childers St, Civic. The dates for the next few meetings are 13 January, 10 February and 10 March. Members are welcome to use all Workers' Club amenities on the night (as long as you are signed in).

The Beginners' Group runs from 7-7:45pm prior to each meeting.

Details of upcoming meetings and main topics will be advertised in the Canberra Times "Fridge Door" the week of the meeting.

Newsletter Contributions

beCAUS is produced bi-monthly. Contributions to the newsletter can be ubmitted to the Editor via the newsletter area of the bulletin board, at the monthly meetings or to The Editor, PO Box 596, Canberra 2601.

Articles, reviews, comments and graphics are always welcome. The next newsletter is due out by the January 1994 meeting. The deadline for contributions to the newsletter is the end of the month preceding production. All contributions should be accompanied by the author's name and contact details. We reserve the right to refuse, disclaim and/or edit contributions.

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Advertising Rates

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Regular	$25	$19	$10
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Back cover	$74	$59	$29
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Flyer inserts	$39	$29	
Artworks	$39	$29	$19

Copy is to be provided to the editor either in Amiga graphic file format or as appropriately sized printed copy.

Production

The Editor for this newsletter was Darryl Hartwig. The copy was formatted using Professional Page v4.0 and the masters were printed on a Postscript printer by Desktop Utilities. The offset printing was done by Tuggeranong Print. The collating and mailing was done by the DTP SIG.

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Front Cover

On the front cover is another image raytraced by Povray. It took quite a while on my (unaccelerated) A2000. I used The Art Department (version 1) to brighten up the scene a bit. Povray is a PD raytracer, and uses a script language to set up the scene, unlike a raytracer such as Real 3D.

CAUS Committee (1994)

Role	Name	Phone	Hours
Director	Chris Townley	254-5922(h)	6-8pm
Vice Director	Michelle Jenkins	241-8785(h)	6-8pm
Secretary	Andrew White	281-1872(h)	6-8pm
M'ship Sec.	Mathew Taylor	241-8892(h)	6-8pm
Treasurer	Rob Ashcroft	254-4075(h)	6-8pm
Editor	Darryl Hartwig	293-2347(h)	6-8pm
Proprety Officer	Joe McCully	255-2128(h)	
Committee	Neil Squires	259-1128(h)	
	Berenice Jacobs	255-2284(h)	
	Loy Winkler		4-10pm

In This Issue

Editorial

Hello! And Happy New Year! I trust everyone got an CD32 or A1200 in their Christmas stocking? (Who'd be lucky enough to receive an A4000?) Unfortunately I didn't, but then I'll be waiting to see what Commodore will be bringing out during this year. I've heard *rumours* that the new AAA chips will be in machines by July, and I want one of those! We'll see...
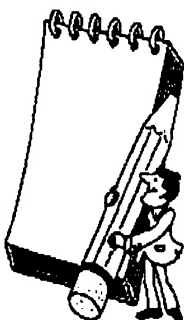
All in all, I've really enjoyed being editor since taking over the position. It's given me another excuse to play with my A2000. And it seems my request for articles has paid off. There are a couple of reader's articles in this edition. **Excellent!** Keep them coming.

Contrary to what I said in the last magazine, this edition should reach you before the January meeting (let me know if it didn't). This is to encourage as many members as possible to come to the meeting. From then on, the magazines will be available at every second meeting (bi-monthly).

Anyway, 'til next time, Ciao and have a good year!
Darryl Hartwig

Mathew's Ravings!

Hiya all! Its the start of a big new year, and I hope you all got lots of Amiga goodies in your Christmas stockings! Membership is looking good for the new year, and several people chose CAUS membership as their Christmas present for a friend or family member.

A quick note regarding distribution of Fish disks. I will be supplying selected Fish disks to Caus members only, free of charge. If you would like to get some new fish disks at the next meeting, phone me on 241 8892. You can also download the latest and greatest fishes from the CAUS BBS.

Membership Fees

As all of you should be aware, all memberships fall due on February 1st. Some of you will have memberships that extend past that date, and will have special letters enclosed that explain that situation. As all memberships will fall due in February, I would appreciate it if you could either post your membership fees to the PO Box address, or renew in January. I feel it would be best for all concerned if we didn't have a large queue all night in February.

BBS Fees proposal

Due to the high cost of providing a BBS service, the committee has decided to put the following proposal to the club members for changing the structure of BBS membership. This proposal is designed to clear up some confusion regarding BBS membership, as well as having the cheapest service for members while delivering the highest possible benefits.

As it stands, BBS membership for members costs $5 and for non members $15. The committee is proposing that the

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Amos Professional Compiler

by Christopher Brittain

Overview

The Amos Professional Compiler package includes an upgraded version of the Amos Compiler that (as the name suggests) now supports Amos Professional, as well as an upgrade for Amos Professional itself to version 2.0. The Amos Professional Compiler can compile programs that are written in Amos Professional, Easy Amos or Amos. I've only used it with Amos Professional, so that is all I will be commenting on.

The Amos Professional Compiler consists of two separate programs, the compiler shell, which is an Amos Pro program that provides a Graphical User Interface (GUI) for APCmp which is the actual compiler program. The compiler shell can be run from the workbench (or CLI [Command Line Interface]) or it can be run from within Amos Pro using an option from the "User" menu.

Compiler Shell

The compiler shell is very simple to use. It has three main icons that let you set:
• Source lets you set the location of your Amos source code, which can be; a file on a disk, a list of programs to be compiled as a batch job or if you are running from within Amos Pro it can be the current program that you have in an editor screen.
• Destination lets you set the location for your compiled program, which can be; a file on a disk or if you are running from within Amos Pro it can be the editor window (as an Amos Compiled program)
• Type lets you set the type of compiled output you want, which can be; a W.B exec (a program executable from the workbench), a CLI exec (a program executable from the CLI [apart from not having a .info icon file, these programs are identical to the workbench version]), or an Amos Compiled program (these programs can be loaded and run from Amos Pro, like a normal Amos program - but since they are compiled they run faster, and can't be edited.)

The compiler shell allows you to access the setup options that let you modify things like how your program will be compiled onto disk and how the compiler shell should operate. The compiler shell can copy the compiler libraries to RAM disk to speed up

compiles. Online help is provided; you just click on the **HELP** button and then click on the option you want help with. The icons & buttons on the compiler shell screen can be set to be animated when you move the mouse over them, which provides a very cute effect :-). A couple of other cute features to amuse you whilst your programs are being compiled are; the ability to play an IFF animation or to play an IFF 8SVX sound sample or sound tracker module whilst compiling (or play an animation and a sound file :-).

Other features

If you don't like GUI front ends you can ignore the compiler shell and compile from within the direct mode of Amos Pro or you can compile direct from the CLI.

With version 2.0, Amos Pro has been restructured so that most of the Amos functionality is now in a library (AMOS.library). One of the options you have when compiling an Amos program is whether to include the AMOS.library in your program making it a completely independent, stand alone program or you can choose not to include it, and thus reduce the size of your compiled program by about 50K, but your program will only work if AMOS.library is available on the Amiga that the program is being run on. You can choose whether to in-

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icons & buttons on the compiler shell screen can be set to be animated

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clude error messages in your program. If you do include the error messages, then the appropriate message will be displayed if your program encounters a run-time error, but if you don't then your program will just terminate - returning to wherever the program was launched from. Normally a (horrible) standard Amos screen will be created for your program, but you can choose to turn this option off, and start your program with a nice clean display. Your programs can be compiled so that if they are run from the CLI they will automatically detach themselves from the CLI and run as a separate

program (rather like executing a program with the AmigaDOS RUN command). Your compiled programs can be automatically compressed before they are saved to disk.

A few new features have been added to Amos Pro version 2.0. There are commands to call the Power Packer Library to compress and de-compress Amos banks. Another new feature is the ability to save Amos Pro Interface programs in a resource bank, instead of defining them in your programs using commands like A$="interface commands" or data statements. This feature works quite well and includes the ability to remove non-essential characters from your interface program. François (the author of Amos) claims that saving interface programs in a resource bank will speed up the initialization of your interface programs. I can't say that I have been able to notice any speed difference, but it certainly does have the effect of reducing the size of your executables. Unfortunately this feature is only useful for interface programs that are not modified by your Amos program.

François promises that the next version of Amos Pro will provide AGA support and real WorkBench & intuition support - which is something to look forward to.

In use:

I've found that the Amos Professional Compiler works faultlessly on my system (Amiga 3000, WB2.04, 10 Meg RAM, 580 Meg HD). I have not found any Amos programs that take more than a few seconds to compile, and I've had no problems with the compiled results. There are plenty of example programs provided to demonstrate the effect of compiling programs. The Amos Pro Compiler is a big improvement over the original Amos compiler which I found occasionally had problems with programs that tested ok and ran under Amos, but couldn't be compiled properly - I've had no such problems with the Amos Pro Compiler.

Being able to create fast, stand alone programs with Amos Pro, makes using Amos Pro a lot more attractive. The compiler itself is fast and easy to use. I have no hesitation in recommending the Amos Pro Compiler to any Amos Pro user.

❏

Virus' have been a relatively small problem for many years on the Amiga, with most virus' being clones of old ones, and so easily detectable by old virus killers. Recently, however, the number of new virus' has increased, and there are now enough to make the average user sit up and take notice. There is no need for general panic, however, as there are plenty of up-to-date checkers to deal with the problems.

Recent surveys show that most people with an Amiga use a current virus checker, and are reasonably safe from virus attack. This is an important statistic, as it means that virus' will have a much harder time of spreading than other systems virus'. But this certainly is no reason to go to sleep on virus protection. Copies of the latest Virus Checker are available at each CAUS meeting, and should be run almost constantly if you are receiving software.

There are somewhere in the order of 400 amiga virus' out there at the moment. A large number of these are clones of some of the very first virus' that come out on the Amiga. In the early days the real virus programmers were few and far between, and a checker that picked up one virus often picked up all its clones. Not so today. Now we have a vast number of sophisticated virus programs being written.

Of course, with all this virus writing going on, someone had to stand up and try to put a stop to it. Safe Hex International was born in 1990, and has grown to encompass around 600 members, all of which are more or less involved in the work of stopping

virus'. The movement, as they like to be called, now has 31 virus centres around the world, which have free phone help lines, and where anyone can get the latest PD virus killers on disk. This disk costs around $5 US, including the disk and postage, and is updated monthly.

Some of the things SHI claim to be doing are:
- Sending new virus' to anti-virus programmers
- Write articles for magazines
- Provide background info for magazines to write their own articles
- Made contact with radio and TV (a

Amiga Virus'
by Mathew Taylor

TV program about data security is said to have aired on Danish local radio and the national TV channel, TV2
- Established a "Virus Test Centre"
- Maintain the world's largest Amiga Virus library
- Keep an "ideas bank" for programmers
- Writing virus detection libraries
- Writing a BBS virus protection program
- Sending letters to software houses that ask them to use 'safety disks'

It is important to note that although a group such as SHI may be working on a program to make sure virus' don't spread via your local BBS, that BBS is very unlikely to have a virus on it.

Most files on a BBS have been scrutinized by at least one person before being made available to the public. For instance, all files uploaded by myself to the CAUS BBS have been unpacked and virus scanned before being repacked and uploaded.

The use of safety disks by software companies is a really good idea, that some companies have taken on board. Safety disks are so called because it is impossible to write anything on them, ie they are read only disks, which are fine for distribution of original software.

As always seems to be the case, you will always find an individual or company that does something particularly stupid. Such is the case with a German publishing house, which published a competition for its readers to create the best virus program. The magazine allegedly even published some hints and tips for writing good virus'. This is obviously the sort of thing we don't need.

There are many virus killers for the Amiga these days. Some of them have had development stop recently, others continue to thrive. John Velthius' "Virus Checker" has reached version 6.33 (at time of writing) and is one of the best and well known killers around.

So, with the wide array of anti-virus programs available today, you need not worry too much about virus'. It's important to be running a virus program, so if you're not already, why not drop into the next CAUS meeting with a blank disk in hand, and get a copy of the latest Virus Checker.

Help Service

The following is a list of members who have volunteered to share their knowledge and experience with other members. If you have a problem or just need a bit of advice in any of the areas listed, please ring during the hours shown.

What's happening	Paul Martin	10-10 M-Su	253-2121
General Help	Joe McCully	6-12pm M-Su	255-2128
	Andrew White	6-8pm M-F	281-1872
	Gordon Owttrim	7-10pm M-Su	297-2692
	Neil Squires	7-10pm M-F 10-9 Sa-Su	259-1128
Hard disks, Digiview	Simon Tow	6-7pm M-F	288-8362
Laser printing	Frank Keighley	6-7pm M-F	239-6658
Desktop Publishing	Frank Keighley	6-7pm M-F	239-6658
	Darryl Hartwig	6-8pm M-Th	293-2347
Desktop Video	Andre Hogie	6-8pm M-F	290-2474
Beginners AmigaDOS	Colin Vance	6-8pm M-Su	241-7113
	Mathew Taylor	6-8pm M-Su	241-8892
ProWrite	Darryl Hartwig	6-8pm M-Th	293-2347
Amos	Bernie Wiemers	6-8pm	248-9837
Superbase Wordperfect	Andrew Boundy	8-10pm M-Th	291-6971
C	Joe McCully	7-10pm M-F	255-2128
Hardware	Mathew Taylor	6-8pm M-Su	241-8892

Please contact the editor with updates to this list.

Brilliance - The New King

by Sylvia Lutnes

Amiga painting is fun again. Spontaneity has returned and we are again able to be creative instead of drumming our fingers between operations. Our masterpieces and animations are safe from our own wild experiments through multiple level UNDO and REDO. We are free to play and explore and we again have the luxury of making mistakes and learning from them... serendipity and good software can bring amazing results.

They're Here

The long-awaited Brilliance from Digital Creations for all Amigas has arrived, rather, they have arrived. Brilliance is actually two programs: Brilliance itself is register-based for colorspaces from 2 to 256, and TrueBrilliance is for HAM6, HAM8, 15 and 24-bit painting and animation. The two programs sport identical interfaces and (except for a couple of items) the same feature set. And Brilliance is fast... even considering the speed limitations of AGA HAM8. If you've ever waited for a full screen gradient fill in DPaint 4, you'll appreciate the difference. Though some operations are not instantaneous they do not generate a trip to the refrigerator either.

Interface

Unlike other types of software, painting often involves changing many parameters between operations. With Brilliance you can access the controls for drawmode, transparency, and range at the same time without hunting down items from pull-down menus. Brilliance uses slide-up panels and opens with its main panel of tools and functions. Clicking on a tool with the LMB activates it, clicking with RMB adds another panel with controls for further defining the tool. Click on the Pentip tool with the RMB, for example, and it adds a panel from which you can select and size your pentip.

You can have various combinations of panels open simultaneously and set up hotkeys to access particular sets from the keypad. (Keypad hotkeys are not available on the A600.) Preconfigured panel-sets are already mapped to the keypad and I've so far had no reason to change them. The visible panels can all be toggled at once with the F10 key, MMB, or spacebar... or the extra panels can be collapsed under the main panel by clicking on the 'squash' button. To close individual panels, click with the LMB on the left side.

The 'user-feedback' area on the main panel shows you at all times what you are doing... what tool is under the cursor, what draw mode is current and what frame of an animation you're on. It takes a little time to get used to this method if you've only used pull-down menus, and it will take time to learn what exactly is available where, but it is definitely worth the effort. Once learned, there's no way I'd go back to pull-down menus for a painting program.

Buffers

The Buffer tool from the main panel is your link between Brilliance and the outside world. Here you create and select buffers (as many as memory permits). Each can contain either an image or an animation and can have its own palette. As far as I can tell, each buffer must have the same size and resolution though you can change screen mode at any time. You also save and load pictures from here as well as set preferences (which includes adjusting the size of your UNDO buffer), print, and quit. The clipboard is supported and you can load and work with bitmaps larger than your screen and chip memory. Brushes, Stencils, Animbrushes, and Palettes are all saved and loaded from their own respective panels.

Tools

Brilliance has much the same tool-set as DPaint and uses the same keyboard shortcuts: 'm' for magnify, 'j' for spare screen, 'alt' for anim painting, etc. Many of the tools, however, have been greatly enhanced or work slightly differently. You now have a filled straight-line and filled-curve tool besides the filled freehand tool. The airbrush tool has a brush mode that allows you to splatter paint thru a brush mask. When cutting a brush you can lasso the area you wish to snip by drawing around it which makes cutting those odd shaped brushes a snap. For the operations that are similar to

DPaint, you usually have to go about it a different way which will be confusing at first. A few operations are slightly slower (a perspective fill from a brush, for example, is slower even with anti-aliasing off) though most are noticeably faster.

Draw Modes

Besides the normal stable of drawing modes, Brilliance adds tint, colorize, darken, lighten, stencil (for painting an area of protection), range (for cycling the paint under the pen), random cycle (for airbrush), two dithers, and more.

Palette

The palette is always visible on the main panel. It shows up to 64 colors and a simple click on the arrow beside it will expand it to show the entire spectrum. And the colors are visible... they're not fuzzed out by ham mode since Brilliance uses copper magic to display them. The palette panel and functions are explained very well in the manual.

Gradients

You can define up to 8 ranges that can have up to 128 color tabs each. Add, subtract, and move color tabs with simple mouse clicks. Methods of using ranges are found in the Draw Modes panel and must be selected in order to use your gradients for fills, lines, and splatters. If your color space is large enough, Brilliance will spread colors between tabs to give you a smoother gradient. You can select how many steps you want interpolated. You can also stack markers with two colors to give an abrupt transition at that spot. Of course, dither level, clear, cycle and reversing the tabs are supported. (Cycle not available in TrueBrilliance.)

Amiga painting is fun again

Stencil

Very robust. You can even do stencil masks for all frames of an animation. You can lasso an area containing the colors you want or pick them from the screen with an eye-dropper. And using stencil from the Draw Modes panel allows you to paint any area on the

screen to protect it. In TrueBrilliance the selection is a bit more complex allowing you to define a variance range for colors to include.

Transparency
My favorite function. A simple slider belies the magic of using transparency with, for example, gradient fills. The larger your color-space, the more subtle the effect.

Text
Text handling makes use of scalable Compugraphic fonts so you can select any size you wish. This works for bitmap fonts also, but scaling them is not recommended. You cannot write text directly on the screen, however. You must type your text string in the Font requester. This is brought to your main screen as a brush which you stamp in place.

Anti-Aliasing
The 4 levels of anti-aliasing are quite fast for most operations and incorporate smoothing which you need an extra step for in DPaint. I did have some confusion with anti-aliasing, however. Though it works with perspective fill (filling a shape with a brush) I couldn't make it work on a stretch, pattern or shape fill using the same brush.

Brushes and AnimBrushes
There are 8 wells to store brushes and animbrushes for easy retrieval. All the functions you're used to having with brushes are included... and some are easier and more intuitive. For cutting animbrush you have the choice of putting actual screen coordinates into a requester in case you can't visualize how far the brush roams during the anim. You can also set the number of frames to cut and whether to cut backwards or forwards. One biggie is being able to change the frame number of the current animbrush. You can also animpaint over a different number of frames than you have in the animbrush. You can animpaint backwards

or ping-pong, and you can 'pause' your animbrush frame and paint with it like a regular brush. You can morph between your current brush and any (regular) brush in a well.

Animations and Tweening
Every function in DPaint's Move requester is available, and then some. You can use Adjust from the Tween Panel to visually stamp your beginning and ending positions, and use the mouse to set rotation, and perspective. Ease controls allow more flexibility with determining the frame when ease-in changes to ease-out. And opacity is handled like the coordinates, you can have acceleration and deceleration parameters. You can even get yourself fading trails.

## *And Brilliance is fast...*

Wishes and Things
You can't bring pictures and brushes from TrueBrilliance into Brilliance. Motion paths have been hinted at... hope that's true. And I would like to see ARexx support for making anim frames, a DITTO that heeds changes to parameters on Redo and I would like Brilliance to honor transparency when merging from the spare screen. And MORE tutorials. I would have liked tutorials that covered every function and operation.

Be aware that 256 color pics saved from Brilliance tend to crash from DOpus; this may well be a DOpus problem. Also, Brilliance is the only program I've found that doesn't let WindX activate another screen when I use L-Amiga-M to switch. As for bugs, except for the anti-aliasing problem above, I haven't really found any. Rather amazing for a first release. Please note that the copy protection is in the form of a joystick port dongle. I was very annoyed when I found that the dongle does not even have a passthru. I was even more annoyed when I discovered that you can't plug the Brilliance dongle into Scala's (which HAS a passthru). You must

place the Scala dongle in the mouse port to run both programs. Digital Creations is considering a more reasonable solution but I fear it will still involve hardware.

Brilliance will run with any Amiga under 1.3 or higher. It requires a minimum of 2 megs but 4 megs is recommended. Installation is painless, though it will add a program to your c: directory and add a line to your startup. Digital has given us a truly professional manual which details every button and operation and has explanations throughout. There's a Quickstart section, tutorials, and a complete index. I just don't understand why the cover is not in color. The tutorials are fun to do. One of them is the best idea I've yet run into; it's almost worth the price of the program just for the fishtank and fish. This is a project that's fun to come back to again and again.

DPaint is a great program. Unfortunately it bogged down terribly under both HAM and AGA. The time is right for us to have a successor and I feel very strongly that Brilliance is more than worthy. Considering that
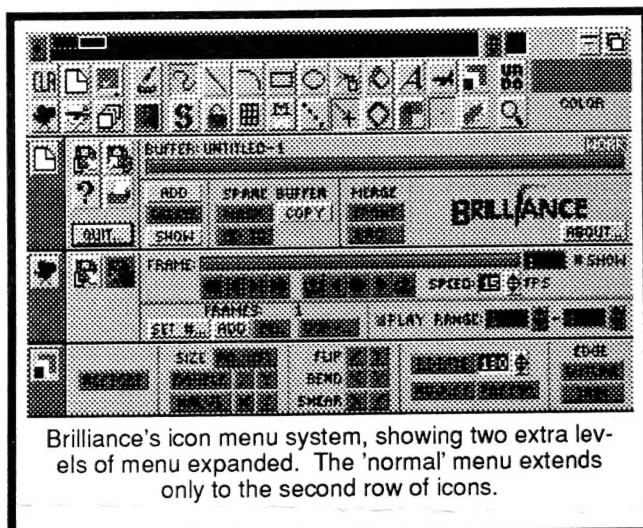
Brilliance's icon menu system, showing two extra levels of menu expanded. The 'normal' menu extends only to the second row of icons.

this is just the first release of Brilliance and it already surpasses our old standby in so many areas, can you imagine what the future for Brilliance might hold?

Brilliance $249.00
Digital Creations
P.O. Box 97
Folsom, CA 95673-0097
(916) 344-4825 (voice)
(916) 635-0475 (fax)
(916) 983-3288 (bbs)

Radio Amiga

by Mathew Taylor

On Wednesday 20th of October, I was lucky enough to be invited to view the broadcast equipment that a local radio station is developing for use Australia wide.

The radio station is known as Radio Rhema, and broadcasts on FM105.5. It has only made a few test broadcasts in it's short history, but already nineteen groups around Australia have voiced an interest in becoming "Radio Rhema's" in their locality. The station is a Christian based organisation, whose aim is to contribute towards finding solutions to the many and varied problems people face daily, through a program of well balanced overseas and local material aimed at meeting the spiritual and social needs of the whole community.

So why was I lucky to be invited there? Several people associated with the station are working on a computer based broadcasting system, based on the Amiga 3000.

The system is still around 12 months from a final product, but already is looking very professional, and certainly very easy to use. The aim behind the system is to do away with the multitude of CD's and Cartridges that adorn the walls of the standard radio station these days. There are already many groups throughout Australia who have shown an interest in taking on the Radio Rhema franchise, along with the new system, when it is complete.

The system does this by storing songs, station ID's advertisements etc, on hard disk via a Sunrise audio card. It then allows you to put together different shifts for each announcer, with songs etc all pre-programmed and ready to broadcast, direct from the Amiga.

Setting up each shift couldn't be easier. Just drag the song or spot from it's drawer on the workbench into the shift editor and its there. You can then adjust how long the spot will fade in before it is at full volume, and how long it will take to fade to zero volume. You then just put the spots in one after the other, and you're almost finished!

Then there is the screen that the radio announcer sees. He sees eight to nine spots on the screen at once. The currently playing spot has a counter showing how much longer it will play for. If the announcer wishes to break in, he can click on the gadget joining the current spot with the one following and the Amiga will stop after the current spot. The announcer simply presses the play gadget to continue once he has said his piece.

The announcer can also decide to move songs or spots around. If someone called in and requested a song that was already scheduled to play in that shift, the announcer can move it up, say, to the end of the next advertising section. He can then dis-join the song from the ads, giving himself time to announce that the requested song is about to play.

Another feature is song intro count down. The Amiga can display a timer that tells the announcer how long there is until the musical introduction of a song is finished, and the singing begins. This allows him or her to voice over the intro.

The system is so simple, that's about all there is to it. The hardware to run it is a bit more complex however. Aside from the usual batter of transmitters (which the station is currently raising funds for) and other broadcast equipment, there is the Amiga, which ideally would operate with 8 to 12 meg of ram, and twin 3 gigabyte hard disks (a gigabyte is 1024 megabytes). The huge hard drives are required for storage of the sound, which can take up to 10 megabytes per minute of sound for stereo samples at a high sampling rate. Also, to produce broadcast quality samples, a SunRize audio digitising card is used to record and play back 16 bit samples.

If you would like to know more about Radio Rhema (Rhema, by the way, means 'The spoken or inspired word of God' in Greek) or would like to offer financial or skilled assistance, you can reach them at:

Radio Rhema
PO Box 781
Belconnen ACT 2616
Ph: 251 3277

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World of Commodore Amiga '93 The Play Unfolds

by Jim Meyer

The folks who attended last year's World of Commodore-Amiga knew that the real action wasn't on the floor, but at the Keynote speeches by Jim Dionne and Lew Eggebrecht. It was one year ago that Eggebrecht shocked everyone in attendance by revealing exactly what Commodore's plans were for the Amiga line and the technology behind it. The Keynote was **THE** hot event of the show, and the hall was packed.

Jim Dionne won the audience over when, after having trouble with his mike, he quipped "This thing is as hard to use as a DOS machine!" After proclaiming his bravery by noting the lack of chicken wire in front of the stage, Dionne recounted the painful facts of a year that was bad not just for Commodore, but for the entire computer industry. Commodore, he wryly noted, had "led the way" by announcing massive losses and restructuring ahead of Apple and IBM.

The "bad medicine," as Dionne called it, is behind Commodore now. After closing out a dismal year, the US operation - starting out with a clean slate - will make "an appreciable profit" this quarter. Dionne noted that the decisions he had to make, although painful and disagreeable to many end-users, resulted in a "much stronger Commodore."

This new "streamlined" Commodore has adjusted to the realities of the marketplace and is now designed to make a profit with far fewer sales, in dollar terms. Among the changes have been significant reductions in staff, an overhaul of distribution (instead of shipping to 180 direct dealers, Commodore will use 5 distributors), and a new, more efficient manufacturing facility in the Philippines which replaces facilities in the US, Taiwan, and Germany. Dionne expressed the opinion that the "new" Commodore would be in a stronger position and would continue to bring out "new and innovative" products.

The restructuring did not go smoothly at first, as Dionne freely admitted. There were significant problems when Commodore outsourced its service program, as a number of users know first-hand, and the new factory was much more difficult to bring online than Commodore had hoped. Howev-

er, Dionne stated that the problems were behind them, and that the supply of the popular A1200 and A4000 machines should return to normal in September (1993). Dionne further stated that by outsourcing such things as distribution, warehousing, and servicing, Commodore would better be able to concentrate on the task of building computers.

Dionne went on to describe CD32 and Commodore's plans for its launch, and then introduced Lew Eggebrecht. After describing the development of CD32, its capabilities, and Commodore's intentions regarding its future, Eggebrecht dropped the bombshell: The AAA chipset had been cast in silicon! Although it was only the first prototype, the AAA crew was able to blit objects and bring up "true-color" 24-bit screens. There was, it seemed, hope for the future after all.

One of the most pleasant things about listening to Eggebrecht speak is the fact that you rarely have to read between the lines. When asked about the possibility of retrofitting the A3000 for AGA, he said that it just wasn't possible, due to too many electrical differences. And as for upgrading the A4000 to AAA? That was a definite possibility, but would require a motherboard swap.

Eggebrecht said that Commodore had been actively researching RISC technology for next-generation Amigas, and also because "we need it to support a wide array of (possibly non-AmigaDOS) software." While Commodore has not yet selected a RISC chip, Eggebrecht flatly stated that they would be going RISC. But that doesn't necessarily mean the end of the Motorola family. Eggebrecht mentioned that Motorola had a large

group still working on the 68000 family, and that there would be "dramatic advances" in the future.

I was able to sit down with Jim Dionne after the keynote and ask him about a wide variety of issues. Principal among these was how Commodore expected to make CD32 a success, given the failure of CDTV. Dionne freely admitted the mistakes of CDTV - too high a price, sub-par performance, and too little advertising - and said that they had learned from that experience. CD32, he believes, is priced right at $399, and offers the best mix of features for the price.

But what about advertising? That's where the European launch comes into play. According to Dionne, it costs 10 times as much to market a product in the U.S. than it does in Europe, for the same number of sales. Given that fact, plus favorable name recognition, Europe was ideal for the launch. Commodore can "ramp up" sales much more quickly in Europe, Dionne said. And the profit from European sales will be ploughed back into the American CD32 campaign, due to start with a "big splash" at the CES show in January.

Fair enough, but what happens if CD32 is a runaway hit? Would Commodore drop the Amiga in a heartbeat? Not a chance. Dionne explained that the profit margin on a CD32 is minuscule compared to the 4000. The real intent of this exercise is to sell more 1200s and 4000s. How? Commodore feels that consumers, once they experience the Amiga CD32, will come away with a favorable impression. "We're hoping that they'll try the CD32 and say 'If that's what their games console can do, I wonder about their computers'", said Dionne.

Commodore realizes that it's a tough row to hoe, that the Amiga "faithful" will always be skeptical. Irving Gould - CEO of Commodore, International - once remarked about the Amiga fans "If they saw me walk on water, they'd say I was afraid to get wet." But it looks like they're trying, anyway. And is Dionne afraid of the competition? Nope. He said that he hoped 3DO would be released, and that he expected the price to gradually fall, $100 at a time. But 3DO, he said, would "educate the public" about a CD games console. And he's confident that CD32 will only benefit.

I asked about the layoffs, and what he was doing to improve morale. The layoffs, he said, were painful but were a necessary evil. "We got rid of the deadwood a long time ago," Dionne continued, "so all the people we had to let go of were good people." And morale? Commodore has already hired back some of the recently-departed, and the European success of CD32 can't help but cheer the remaining troops.

Jim Dionne, alas, won't be among the remaining. Despite his 15 years at Commodore ("I like pain," he said, with at least a trace of sarcasm), we received late word that he had tendered his resignation. Perhaps he had finally had his fill of the tight-fisted refusal of Mehdi Ali to spend a dime to promote the Amiga. Perhaps it was something else. Ironically, Dionne leaves just as the U.S. operation returned to profitability. We wish his successor luck, but we wonder how much longer Commodore can continue - or continue to flounder - with Ali at the helm.

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CAUS Public Domain Collection

The Society's Fred Fish collection of public domain software contains a huge variety of goodies from text editors, databases, communication, graphic and music programs through to utilities, games, disks of pictures and animations and many demonstrations of commercial programs.

The following people are PD librarians:

Simon Tow	Fisher	288-8362
Lawrence Coombs	Aranda	251-5523
Berenice Jacobs	Scullin	255-2284
Bernie Wiemers (AMOS)		248-9837

You have the choice of buying the disks or swapping them for some new acceptable NAME brand disk that you own. The copying fee for each disk (except for the FISH catalogue disk) is $1 to cover the librarian's costs. For those who want other than the Fish collection, Berenice Jacobs holds a large collection of alternate public domain. Contact Berenice for more details.

Special Interest Groups

Each of the following members is coordinating a Special Interest Group (SIG) in the listed topic. If you are interested in joining one of these groups and getting more out of your Amiga, either contact them direct or indicate your interest at the next monthly meeting:

Joe McCully	255-2128	C programming
Darryl Hartwig	293-2347	DeskTop Publishing
Andre Hogie	290-2474	Video
Bernie Wiemers	248-9837	AMOS programming

If anyone else out there would like to start their own SIG, please see a member of the committee.

NEC Multispin CDR74-1 CD-ROM Drive

by Christopher Brittain

Fred Fish recently announced that he was intending to release his Fish disks on CD-ROM. I thought this was good news, as I've always been slightly concerned about third party companies' commitment to regular updates of their CD-ROM collations of Fish disks. What's more, Fred said that once the floppy based Fish distribution reaches 1000 disks, he will cease distributing floppies, and the Fish distribution will be only on CD-ROM. At that time the Fish distribution was already into the 900's, so I thought it was probably time to start thinking about purchasing a CD-ROM drive, especially since Fred was saying if you pre-ordered the Fish CD-ROMs they would only be $19.95 each - which sounded like a very reasonable price to me. Having filled in one of his questionnaires, Fred sent me an order form, so I took the plunge and filled in the form and faxed it off to him. Having placed an order, I was now committed to buying a CD-ROM drive, and my house mate (who is also an A3000 owner) said that he would be willing to share in the purchase if we got an external drive. We still had a couple of months before Fred would be ready to release his first CD-ROM so we had some time to investigate the state of the Amiga CD-ROM drive market.

We readily discounted CD-TV as it's only 1.3, and with the advent of the CD, it seems unlikely that there will be much continuing support for the CD-TV. At $689 the CD is tempting in itself - but without an easy way to currently add keyboard, mouse, hard drive etc., it isn't really a realistic solution for making use of Fish disks (although Fred says he will be adding CD support to future Fish CD-ROMs).

I started picking up the FidoNET CDROM echo, and picked up quite a bit of general CD-ROM info. I learnt that MultiSpin is NEC's generic term for faster than standard CD-ROM drives, at the moment it mainly refers to double-spin drives, that is, a 300K transfer rate rather than the standard 150K transfer rate of the older non-multi-spin drives (CD-TV is a standard drive whereas CD uses a double-speed drive), but there are rumours of triple & quad speed drives. I learnt that 'Multi-Session' means that when you are using Kodak Photo-CD, you can take your Photo-CD which already has pictures on it, back to Kodak and get more pictures put on the same CD-ROM, up to a maximum of 100 pictures. If your CD-ROM drive is Multi-Session Kodak Photo CD compatible, it means that you will be able to read the extra pictures that you have put on the CD-ROM, whereas if your drive is not Multisession capable, you will only be able to read the first session of the pictures on Photo-CD ROMs. I heard rumours that Panasonic were going to stop manufacturing CD-ROM drives and concentrate on magneto-optical drives, although I have not heard any real confirmation of that rumour. I was amazed at the trials and tribulations that our Intel based MS-DOS & OS/2 using brethren go through to use CD-ROM drives. They seem to have a preference for using bizarre proprietary methods of connecting CD-ROM drives to sound cards rather than using the SCSI standard! The stories of woe, concerning incompatibilities between drives and sound cards, between cards and drivers, and between the many sound card 'standards' (and in the Intel/MS-DOS/OS/2 world the word standard is used very VERY loosely), made me very glad that the A3000 has SCSI standard on the motherboard - making it the obvious way to connect a CD-ROM drive to an A3000. None of this nonsense about wasting a slot on a dedicated controller for a CD-ROM drive or having to worry about the various incompatible sound card standards for Amiga owners (well not for A3000 owners anyhow :-). I hope that the next generation of Amiga's with AAA, at least have SCSI II as an option, rather than forcing people to go down the dark and limiting path of IDE, like the A4000 has).

After reading the CDROM echo for a few weeks I decided that what we needed was an external, multi-spin, multi-session Kodak photoCD compatible drive. I looked through advertisements in ACAR, and got a quote from a couple of local computer stores, but eventually we decided on an NEC Multispin CDR74-1 from the Australian CD-ROM club, which is based here in Canberra. I ordered the drive on a Sunday and the drive was hand delivered to my door on the following Tuesday evening for a total of $775.00 - which I thought was a pretty good price and excellent service.

The specifications of the NEC CDR74-1 are: it is an external drive (the CDR84 is the equivalent internal drive), SCSI I & II, Multispin, 300K transfer rate, 280 millisecond access rate, 256K buffer & Kodak Multisession capable. It has two 50 pin *centronics-style* SCSI connectors, switchable built-in SCSI termination, rear mounted RCA jacks, front mounted headphone jack & volume control, vertical installation kit. The only slightly annoying thing about the CDR74-1 is that it uses the cartridge system for mounting CD-ROMs - however the fact that it uses a cartridge system means it is possible to mount it vertically.

After reading Dan Barrett's USENET survey of Amiga CD-ROM that was conducted during Spring 1993, we decided to purchase the Xetec CDx driver software, as it was consistently praised by users, is well supported by Xetec, and seemed to be a good quality product. We ordered the Xetec CDx driver software through

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Megadisk for about $99, and received the same efficient, prompt service that we have always enjoyed from Megadisc. The software arrived in the mail two days later. The CDx software supports ISO 9660, High Siera,

Macintosh HFS, has some CD-TV emulation, supports Kodak PhotoCD on XA-ready drives, by providing a simple program that can convert Kodak PhotoCD data to IFF files (but currently only supports single session). It comes with a program called CD Remote, which is a CDDA (Audio CD) playing program. It presents an interface that is similar in features and appearance to a normal CD player, giving you buttons such as: Play, Stop, Pause, Skip tracks (backwards/forwards), Scan (backwards/forwards), Eject, Volume, Time, Mode, Repeat & Info. The CDx package also comes with two CD-ROMs called Fish & More, which as the name suggests contain stuff from Fish disks, as well as other public domain & shareware programs.

I've also used version 1.3 of the PD CD-ROM driver software, AmiCDROM. It works without any problems, but it doesn't support Amiga Protection bits, and it doesn't have the other bells and whistles of Xetec CDx.

The day after we got the CDR74-1, I ordered Walnut Creek's Aminet CDROM from the Australian CD-ROM club for $37.50. The Aminet CDROM includes, the AB20 archive (which is an Internet archive from NASA of ab20.larc.nasa.gov - which has gone offline, so this is a snapshot of the final state of the archive), the Aminet archive (also from the Internet) and comp.sources.amiga and comp.binaries.amiga from USENET, for a total of 650 Meg of Amiga stuff. An interesting anomaly with the Aminet CDROM is that all the programs in the TOOLS directory that are provided *ready to use* have the script bit set - even executable files. This means that when using the Xetec CDx software which supports Amiga protection bits, it is not possible to run any of the programs in the TOOLS directory directly from the CD-ROM. However when using the Ami-CDROM software, which ignores Amiga protection bits, there is no problem running the programs directly from the CD-ROM :-).

I got my first FISH CD-ROM on the 9th of November 1993. It has over 47,000 files, adding up to about 638 Meg of data. According to Fred this is broken up into 84 Meg of new materi-

al, 150 Meg of utilities & tools, and 404 Meg of old FISH stuff. Obviously I have not had time to go through it all (638 Meg!) but it seems quite well organized, even though Fred said he didn't get time to put as much onto the CD-ROM as he had hoped, and he reckons there are a number of things he wants to improve on the next CD. Despite what Fred says, I've found the October Fish CD-ROM to be better

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organized and easier to use than the Aminet CD-ROM or the Fish & More CD-ROMs that come with the Xetec CDx drivers.

All the software comes in both compressed (ready for BBSs) and uncompressed formats. Fred has included heaps of GNU stuff like gcc 2.4.5, emacs 18.59, tar, etc, that he has personally re-compiled from GNU source code that he pulled off the nets himself. There is also some BSD stuff, and there are v37 & v39 Commodore Amiga Includes and development stuff that Fred can now distribute on his CD-ROMs under licence from Commodore.

The old Fish disks included on the October CD-ROM are 600-910, and the new Fish disks are 911-930. There is also 40 Meg of new material that will not be included in the floppy disk distribution of Fish disks.

As I said, I've only skimmed the surface, but there is certainly a lot of really interesting Amiga stuff on this CD-ROM. I think Fish disks going to CD-ROM is probably the *best* thing to happen for Amiga PD, since Fred started releasing his Fish disks.

Fred Fish has posted a message to the Internet warning people that Fish disk 919 contains an active Saddam Hussein virus. Since the October Fish CD-ROM contains fish disk 919, the program containing the Saddam Hussein virus is also on that CD-ROM.

The exact location of the file in question is: "BBBF/ FileVirLib/ VirusToTest/ Saddam_Hussein_virus". Apparently Safe Hex International included the file so that people could test their anti-virus software, unfortunately they didn't include warnings that if users running Kickstart 1.2 or 1.3 execute the file they would infect their system with the Saddam Hussein virus. Fred only found out about this virus 2 hours before he was due to catch a plane to Cologne in Germany for the WoC (World of Commodore) show. Fred says that he destroyed about 500 CD-ROMs at the WoC show by carving up the optical side, he then signed the front and gave them away as souvenirs of the show - much to the frustration of local German users who begged to be allowed to purchase the virus infected disks in usable form. Fred is offering to replace the virus infected CD-ROMs that have already been distributed for free, if the infected disk is returned to him. Since I don't run 1.2 or 1.3 I'm not going to worry.

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Mathew's Ravings

fees be changed thus; Members pay $10 for their initial membership to the BBS. Additional family members may have access for $5 each. Non members fees will rise to $20 each, with second and consecutive family members being $15 each.

The committee believes these fees more accurately reflect the nature of our membership and the benefits that the BBS has delivered, and will continue to deliver to its users. Even with the increase, the fees still do not come close to covering the costs involved with running a BBS. We are very

lucky to have Darrell Cowan running his board with us.

This proposal will be voted on at the AGM. This years AGM won't be falling so close to Easter, so I expect most of you will be able to attend. Even if you cannot attend, there is no reason why you cannot stand for one of the positions on the committee, or offer your vote to a proxy. Make sure you have your say.

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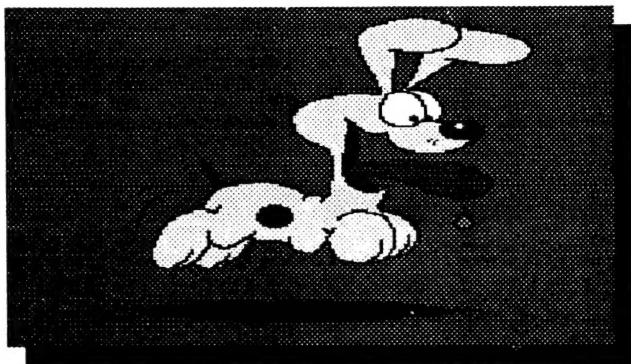
What's Happening?

Upcoming Meetings
Jan 13: Chrissy present night.
Feb 10: GAMES night!!!
Mar 10: Suggestions?

GAMES Evening
For the February games evening, could we make a request for everyone to bring their Amiga if at all possible. The more Amigas we have there, the greater variety of games that will be playable, and the more fun everyone will have. Could anyone help out with power boards and extensions leads as well? Thank you, and hope to see you there!

Raffle
The raffle for the Maestro 14.4K Fax/Modem has been drawn. It was won by none other than our Secretary, Andrew White (No! He didn't draw the tickets. He was off flying a kite at the time!). The second prize of an open order from Carina Computers was won by Terry from Bungendore, and the third prize of a couple of boxes of disks was won by Adam Begley. The next raffle will be a 500Mb Hard Disk Drive!!!

Christmas Break-up
After a breezy start to the day and an ominous cloud or two, the weather held off for a BBQ'ed snag and steak. The above raffle was drawn. A couple of kites were flown... and that's about it.

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